



Museum
Library
Archives

NEW YORK STATE Office of Cultural Education

New York State Archives at 50

*A review of the past and report
on the present*



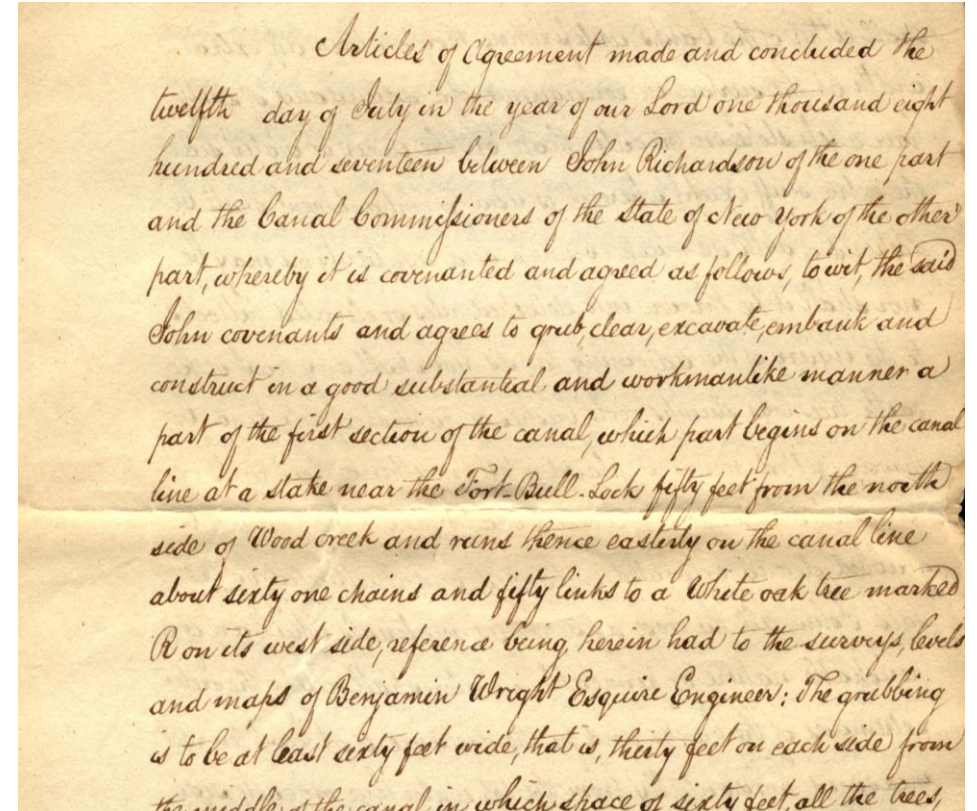
Establishing the State Archives

- Chapter 869 of the Laws of 1971, signed on June 25, 1971 by Governor Rockefeller establishes the State Archives.
- The State Archives preserves and provides access to the records of New York colonial and state government that “warrant permanent preservation by the state.”
- First state archivist was hired in 1974.
- Initial transfer of records was in 1978 with 4,000 boxes of records.



Records Preservation and Access

- By 1981 the collection had grown to over 26,000 boxes. Today the archives preserves over 175,000 boxes of records.
- In 1979 Archivists answered 1,200 reference questions. In the last 12 months our Ancestry.com collection has provided access to over 12 million records.
- The collection reflects over 7,000 unique sets of records, all are described in our online systems, available through our website.
- In 2020 Archives responded to 7,507 reference inquiries sent via e-mail.
- Since 1988 the Documentary Heritage Program has supported programs in non-government repositories.



Records Management for Local Government

- In 1976 responsibility for oversight of local government records was transferred to State Archives.
- A new local government records law was adopted in 1989 to provide grants and increased services to local governments.
- Monthly webinars provide training on records management issues.
- New statewide general schedule for retention of local government records was issued in 2020.
- \$260 million in grants since 1989 to improve local governments have led to dramatic improvements in records management, preservation and access statewide.



Records Management for State Agencies

- In 1987 State Archives assumed responsibility for records management services for state government agencies.
- State Records Center holds nearly 300,000 boxes of temporary records for state agencies.
- State agencies rely on Archives to provide the authority for legal disposition of records and ensure that records of permanent value are retained.
- Robust program of training and hands-on assistance to agencies gives agencies the tools they need to manage records, especially electronic records.



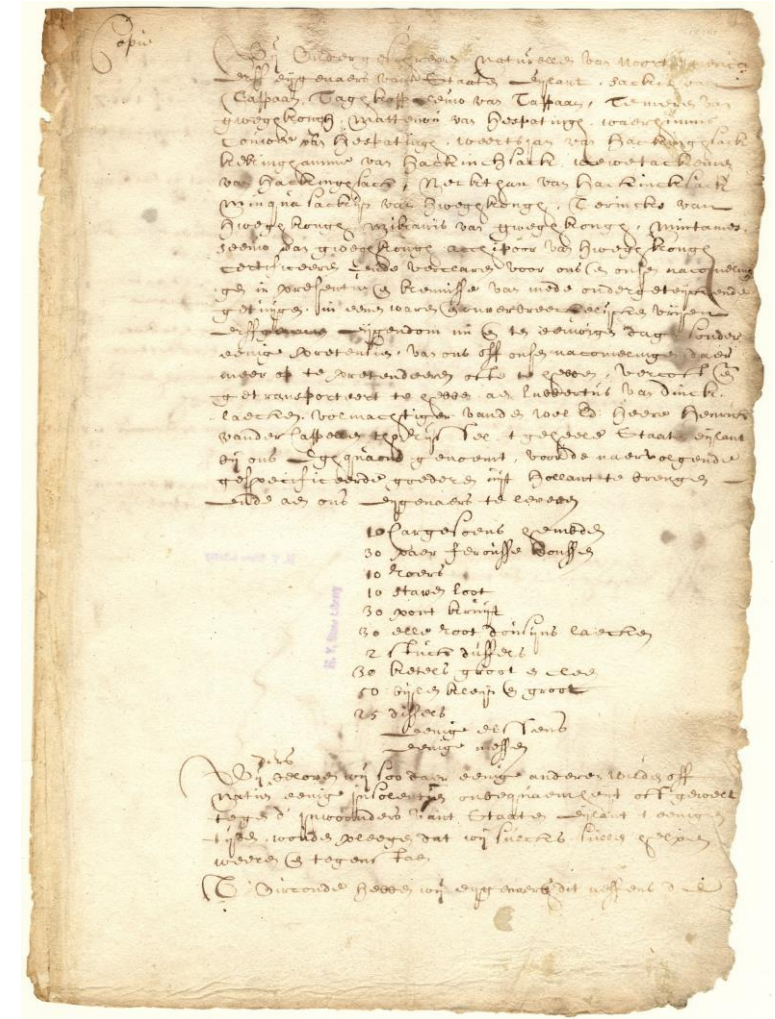
Managing Non-paper Records

- 1986 “Special Media Records Project” identified a major challenge in managing non-paper, mostly electronic records.
- State Archives issued its first guidance on electronic mail in 1995.
- State Archives preserves over 30,000 audio visual items.
- Records in electronic form, dating to 1957, are preserved in a standards-based digital repository that ensures the protection, preservation and accessibility of electronic records.



Going Forward for the Next 50 years

- Assist agencies and local governments in managing electronic records.
- Continue to strengthen digitization to expand access to all New Yorkers.
- Update and expand descriptions of records to make it easier for researchers to locate and request materials from the collection.
- Work with repositories statewide to support inclusion of all voices in the documentary record.



THANK YOU!

